

Affairs of State: Public Life in Late Nineteenth Century America

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student-professor world of the 1890s provide some fascinating material and would be of particular interest to the historian with proclivities for the American social and/or educational experience. This section of the monograph is largely based on the author's fortuitous discovery in the Grand View walk-in vault of a daily journal covering four of the school's five years and which was kept by its two principal professors.

However, the major contribution of this work rests on its analysis of the schism in the Danish Church, for the seminary miscarried, not because of its lack of success in performing its mission, but because of the increasingly acrimonious dissension among Danish Lutherans. All of the explicit problems (the seminary, secret societies, conversion after death, Grundtvigianism, literalism, personalities) were symptoms, not the disease: "The fatal blow to both the school . . . and the church itself was dealt by sociological pressures generated by the new world environment." The Church of Denmark had successfully harbored widely diverse factions, but in the United States, the liberals were out of step with both Protestantism and Lutheranism, a factor that elicited ridicule and even allegations of heresy from other Lutherans. The secessionists could not cope with that state of affairs; the liberals would not surrender their freedom.

School in the Woods, then, is much more than a nostalgic narrative and represents a significant—and persuasive—consideration in reconciling the self-destructive tendencies of one immigrant group.

—Stephen Rye
Grand View College

Affairs of State: Public Life in Late Nineteenth Century America, by Morton Keller. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977. pp. xiv, 631. \$17.50.

From literally thousands of sources, Morton Keller has culled information about all aspects of public life in the late nineteenth century. He slights nothing in his overview, examining municipal, county, and state governmental activities as well as the more familiar national political, legislative, and judicial developments. The subjects discussed range from the obvious ones like reconstruction, industrialism, and populism to the obscure—local ordinances on drinking, marriage, and other civil matters. One is frequently struck by the many similarities to current issues: opposition to school consolidation (Vermont had 2,550 public schools and 2,290 school districts in 1884), gun control (several cities enacted "Pistol Bills" to outlaw the sale of certain types of firearms), and concern over foreign land ownership (many states and the federal government passed laws forbidding aliens from purchasing land.)

Along the way, Keller notes some general trends and themes. For ex-

ample, he effectively substantiates his contention that the rejection of reconstruction policies in the South corresponded to the rejection and dismantling of the overblown governmental apparatus the Civil War had created in the North. Thus the nation's retreat to its more comforting and accustomed laissez-faire traditions in the 1880s and 1890s can be seen as a reaction to the governmental intrusiveness of the 1860s and 1870s. These years also saw a rising interest in the use of government at all levels for the regulation and ordering of social and economic forces. Keller suggests that a major reason for the development of this apparent contradiction to the prevailing limited-government orthodoxy was simply that the tremendous growth the nation experienced in every area created new complexities and strains that demanded political and judicial solutions. The public responses to these problems in the late nineteenth century established a basis for the progressive reforms which were proposed and adopted after 1900.

The wealth of detail presented, however, tends to overshadow the consideration of such major themes because all topics are covered with the same degree of thoroughness. The uniformity of emphasis is deliberate as Professor Keller intends to cover the whole range of public life, not just its more striking aspects. Nevertheless, some of the subjects discussed cry out for far more exposition than they receive; others seem negligible or worthy of only passing notice. The book as a whole, then, is like a smorgasbord which provides the consumer with a melange of nibbles and intriguing tastes but leaves him essentially unsatisfied. Fortunately, two excellent features help offset the shortcomings which this approach necessarily creates. First, the book is well written with a flowing, easily comprehensible style which traps the readers' interest and encourages him to persevere. Second, it is heavily and instructively referenced, with the notes where they should be at the foot of each page. Those interested in further details about any of the topics touched upon have readily at hand a number of avenues to pursue.

—John M. Dobson
Iowa State University

The Indiana Voter: The Historical Dynamics of Party Allegiance in the 1870s, by Melvyn Hammarberg, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977. pp. 251. \$17.50.

As the "new political history" continues to develop, both its promises and its perils become more evident. The increasing methodological and conceptual sophistication of recent studies enrich us as they uncover previously hidden facets of the American political experience. At the same time, however, they threaten to widen further the gulf between professional historians and the reading public, and to divide the profession into two groups—those who write traditional, essentially narrative, political history, and those who eschew description for analysis.

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